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## Rehabilitation Instructions: Acromioclavicular Joint Reconstruction

**WEEKS 0–3:** No formal outpatient therapy, healing phase at home for tissue recovery

- **Sling with pillow:** Wear at all times with arm in “shrugged” position
- **Arm position:** Arm at side or in front; when reclining, a pillow should be placed behind the elbow with sling in place so the elbow is always visible
- **Range of Motion:** No shoulder ROM; elbow/wrist motion ONLY
- **Exercises:** Pendulums when pain permits, gripping
- **Special precautions:** Until six weeks, avoid any exercise or motion where the patient is upright and the arm is unsupported as this applies a load to the reconstruction and places it at risk

**THERAPY Phase I (Weeks 3 – 6 after surgery):**

- **Sling:** Wear at all times with arm in “shrugged” position
- **Arm position:** as above
- **Range of Motion:** PROM/AAROM initially in spine position, motion of hand/wrist/elbow
- **Exercises:** passive ER and with stick, supine well arm assisted elevation in scapular plane
- **Modalities:** Per therapist, including electrical stimulation, ultrasound, heat (before), ice (after)
- **Special precautions:** Until six weeks, as above with support when arm at side

**THERAPY Phase II (Weeks 6 – 12 after surgery):**

- **Sling:** Not required, may consider wearing (without pillow) when outside the home for protection and as sign of vulnerability to others
- **Arm position:** Progress to full as tolerated with incorporation of exercises in upright position
- **Range of Motion:** Progress to AROM without formal restrictions
- **Exercises:** continue Phase I, light stretches such as table slides and wall walks as tolerated without forcing end range motion, advance as tolerated for concentric cuff, deltoid, scapular stabilizers with emphasis on bands and high rep, low weights (<5#)
- **Modalities:** As previous

**THERAPY Phase III (Weeks 12+ after surgery):**

- **Range of Motion:** increase as tolerated with gentle passive stretching at end ranges
- **Exercises:** continue Phase I/II with home program education



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- **Athletics:** light athletics at 12-16 weeks including swimming, water aerobics, jogging and higher level sporting at 16-24 weeks including tennis, golf, light weight training
- **Criteria for discharge home:** pain free active ROM for shoulder elevation, independence with home maintenance program